The ethos of Islam
Nisan, Mordechai
The Jerusalem Post (1950-2013); Apr 13, 2004; ProQuest
pg. 15

The ethos of Islam

• By MORDECHAI NISAN

In 1992, the socialist government in Madrid promoted legislation that recognized Islam's ancient tradition in the country, considering Spanish identity harmoniously interwoven with the Koranic religion.

But the Muslim interpretation of Islam in Spain, beginning with conquest in 711 and ending in 1492, had a more militant twist. Scholar M. Amir Ali commented that Spain had actually been *liberated* by Muslim forces and its tyrants removed. Reflecting on March 11, as Muslim terrorism killed 200 and wounded 1,400 in Madrid, one wonders whether one day this event will also not be commemorated as a liberating moment.

Central to the attitude in the West concerning Islam is the fear to define global terrorism as Muslim terrorism. US President George W. Bush's reticence, a combination of caution and error, has been representative of all Western leaders.

Islam's conceptual lexicon and emotional code are radically different from that conventionally understood and practiced in the West. Yasser Arafat and Ahmed Yassin, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and Hassan Nasrallah, and Osama bin Laden, register as dramatic personae who relentlessly link religion with war against Jews and Christians, devoid of any remorse or shame.

The mind-set of Islam was etched into theological axioms with the appearance of the Koran in the seventh century. This book is its explicit and enduring guide.

The Koran is, among other things, a war tract calling upon "the believers" – there are only Muslim believers – "to fight for the cause of Allah" (4:74-76). This is a war for truth; God is One and Muhammad his true prophet and messenger. The infidels must be punished (16:126-8) for their haughtiness and stubbornness in rejecting Muhammad (6:158), and will burn in the fire of Hell (4:55).

The Muslims must fight the infidels, primarily Jews and Christians, with "the sword of Muhammad." The religion of Muhammad will triumph because the Muslims love death, accepting any individual sacrifice, while the enemy loves life.

At Qadisiyya in 637, Arabs seeking paradise defeated Persians longing for the earth below.

Yet more than the Muslim *shahid* (martyr) is willing to die, the Muslim *mujahid* (fighter) has a passion to kill. This is his religious mission and life's purpose. There is no reason to pity the infidel or feel culpable for his demise. The Koran commands the believer not to trust or befriend the humiliated *dhimmis*, those Jewish and Christian scriptuaries, who must suffer timorously the heavenly sanctioned rule of Islam.

Islam's supersessionary religious doctrine catalyzed relentless destruction, oppression, and abuse of Christians in eastern lands. While there were moments of laxity and civility in applying the robust strictures of domination, Islam did not recoil from razing churches in ancient Damascus and slaughtering Christians in Mesopotamia, inflicting atrocities in Aleppo and exterminating Armenians in their homeland.

MUSLIMS AT PRAYER. A transforming faith. (Ariel Jerozolimski)

More than the shahid is willing to die, the mujahid has a passion to kill

Arab colonization of the Middle East and the Islamization of its peoples were acts of conquest and conversions that define the region until today.

The 14th-century Muslim theologian Ibn Taimiyya explained the root of this sweeping campaign. "Infidels," he wrote, "forfeit their persons and their belongings which they do not use in Allah's service to the faithful believers who serve Allah and unto whom Allah restitutes what is theirs; thus is restored to a man [Muslim] the inheritance of which he was deprived, even if he had never before gained possession."

THE MUSLIM dehumanization of non-Muslims profoundly colors the problematic relationship wherever the two sides meet.

People who innocently take a train in Madrid, a plane in Washington, a bus in Jerusalem, or go to the theater in Moscow, can be wantonly murdered with no Muslim afterthought.

The Koranic precept "to slay them [infidels] wherever you find them" (2:191) is the religious gunpowder filling mosque sermons in Mecca, Cairo, and Gaza. The believers call upon Allah to help the warriors of Islam in Kashmir and Chechnya, Palestine and Kosovo.

The believer is fortified by the belief that any martyrdom operation against haughty Jews and misguided Christians pleases Allah. It is that act which brings honor to the martyr's family.

This religious delirium, with the Muslim's mental universe pining for the heavenly whorehouse of 72 virgins awaiting him in paradise, cannot be apprised through conventional categories of Western humanism.

The Muslim mosque, for prayer in Bradford, Rennes, and Granada, potentially transforms faith into a closed herd mentality, and spirituality into formulae for ineluctable conquest.

The socio-religious processes of demographic growth and conversion, with more than 15 million Muslims inhabiting Western Europe today, constitute alternative and non-violent modes for the Islamic proliferation in Europe. In two generations, half of Holland will be Muslim and a third of Denmark; more than a tenth of France already is.

During the history of Muslim takeover of the Christian lands in the ancient Middle East – which is now being repeated in the Christian lands of Europe – public space was to be cleansed of infidel presumption, if not presence.

This is a process whose signs are emerging in Western countries, as police protect shoppers and travelers, as strategic targets are endangered. Muslims and their sites are free of menace.

IT FOLLOWS, then, that mourning in Madrid and panic in Paris constitute a thoroughly proper state of affairs. The infidel "domain of war," to use an Islamic legalism for non-Muslim lands, must inevitably fall to Islam.

Sheikh Jamal Shakir, in a mosque harangue in Amman on March 5, said: "O God destroy your enemies, the Jews and Crusader enemies of Islam."

While Israel has fought tenaciously against Islamic terrorism, Europe has adopted escapist routes: blaming Israel and its war with the Palestinians as responsible for Muslim terror, and bowing submissively as *dhimmis* must to Muslim violence, threats, and ultimatums. Witness appropriate European cowardice and venality, with the rise of anti-Semitism and the shameful Spanish election results.

Exhausted by two 20th-century continental wars and the long Cold War, now confronting a multifaceted Islamic War, Europe is deluded and divided.

That the Muslims take their religion seriously and literally appears beyond the grasp of European comprehension. The Americans understand better, and Israel smack in the eye of the storm hits back without remorse or shame.

The writer teaches at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His latest book is Minorities in the Middle East: A History of Struggle and Self-Expression.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.